Reflections of the Future

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Reflections of the Future

by RebelS2

Summary

If they came across the past, it was only logical they would encounter the future as well. And maybe, in the face of a future where he would lose his own self, Sonic would finally wake up to error of his reckless, cocky, so-called 'freedom'. Or so Shadow thought.

Snapshot of a Sonic Generations AU (or not AU?) wherein Shadow tags along to help restore the world, and the Time Eater goes into the future as well. Specifically, to Starfall Islands.

Notes

Way back in 2014, I wrote a oneshot fic that features Shadow tagging along with Sonic during Generations. So imagine my joy and mindblow-ness at Sonic X Shadow Generations being announced this year, 10 years later. That fic is still up on the other fanfiction site, and I plan to migrate that here eventually. I was so blown away that I word-vomitted this in one go, even though I haven't written for Sonic since 2017, and haven't written anything in years either. Also, Sonic Frontiers is my favorite game ever, so hence this thing came out.

Nov 20 2024 update: fixed grammar, typos and inconsistent tenses

See the end of the work for more notes

If they came across the past, it was only logical they would come across the future as well. Shadow had been expecting to face some threat from Sonic's future while they tried to get out of this white space. And knowing the shenanigans his blue rival got into, he was preparing to face *anything*.

What he hadn't expected was for them to find an older Sonic, hunched over and coughing like his lungs would give out, ripples of a strange red energy coursing through his fur. Every inhale seemed like a struggle and when he finally got back up and started to walk, he was actually dragging his feet like they were made of lead.

"Whoa, hey," the Sonic beside him said, looking not even the least bit disturbed by the sight. "Another, *other,* me. Man, how many me's do you think there are here?"

Shadow only glanced at Sonic, ignoring his question, while his mind raced. This was clearly somewhere from the future, Sonic's future. And looking at the white terrain, Shadow couldn't identify any location on the planet that matched it, nor even in the books Maria had loved to read. There was nothing about this place that made sense to him at all.

Shadow once had a dream, a dream where humanity turned on him for fear of his powers. He didn't remember the details, but he had woken from that dream less shaken and more…determined. Determined to continue to fight. Somehow, he knew that dream was a premonition.

(He also dreamt of Sonic dying, of coming back to life with a prayer of a human, of a vaguely white hedgehog that somewhat resembled Silver, but he figured that part was just a dream.)

Sonic was much in the same situation right now, being faced with a future, his future. And Shadow couldn't help but watch him, study his reactions. For someone so reckless and unfettered, how did Sonic feel right now, seeing where that arrogance would take him?

Shadow tried to look for some kind of reaction in the Sonic beside him, some hint of what was going through that simple yet stubborn blue head. He tried to look for even a tiny detail – maybe a slight pause, a change in cadence of his steps, his breathing…

But no, Sonic looked completely unperturbed, ignoring his older self and glancing around. "We've already ran through two zones, this

should be the last one, right?"

Sonic grinned at Shadow, before getting into a running position on the ground. "Since this is unfamiliar territory for the both of us, wanna make this a race?"

Sonic…was completely ignoring the other Sonic, the older one, who was starting to traverse the terrain unevenly. His steps were still fast, but he was clearly in pain, and every time he paused, he held his head in his hands. Sonic – the present Sonic - was still looking up at him, waiting for his response, that same cocky, arrogant, *reckless and stubborn* ***grin on his FACE***.

Shadow wanted to punch him in his ugly mug. But instead, he stayed his hand, opting to skid forward. He heard Sonic shout about him cheating as he took a different route through the zone, but Shadow didn't care. He didn't want to see him. He didn't want to see the indifference in his eyes, the nonchalance in his stance.

Why the hell did Sonic not care about the consequences of his own actions?!

The zone was short, full of lava pits and endless chasms of air, but the enemies were faster, more vicious, and move with a precision far more ruthless than the Doctor's machines. Shadow tried to think of the possible foes that had plagued the planet – Dark Gaia, Black Arms, Wisps, even – but none of them hardly resembled these foes. Whatever this was, whatever this future held…it would be something greater than they had ever faced before. That Sonic had ever faced before.

Would Sonic be facing this alone? Shadow wondered, the thought burning into his mind as he skated faster, using his shoes to enhance his acceleration on the rails, skipping several loops just to reach the end quicker.

He reached the end of the stage alone, and stood to wait for Sonic before they exit. Before the present Sonic could reach him though, the future Sonic had somehow also made it to this same area, albeit Shadow had seen him pop in and out of the terrain at several different points. But he didn't so much as stop as he did collapse onto the ground, clutching his head in pain as he mumbled something under his breath. With a morbid curiosity, Shadow strained to listen.

"My friends…" he gasped out. "This is for my friends. Remember…!"

His words sent a shiver down Shadow's quills and spine. Why was he

telling himself this? Was he struggling to remember? What did he mean by that, that this was for his friends? What happened to his friends? Was this…this corruption something he was willingly subjecting himself to, to save his friends? Was Shadow also –

"Annnnd goal!" Came the shout of present Sonic as he skid to a halt, intending to reach the goal while Shadow had his back turned. But before he could do that, Shadow chaos-controled between Sonic and his destination, a snarl on his face.

"What is *wrong* with you?" He hissed, catching Sonic by surprise, who put his hands up in a clear gesture of 'What gives?' while raising his eyebrow. That made Shadow all the more angry.

"Do you *not* realize where we are right now?" He said, gesturing to their surroundings angrily. "*This* is *your* future, Sonic. This is where *you* are going to end up."

He pointed at the future Sonic, kneeling on the ground, still in pain. His entire left arm and torso was already consumed by that red corruption, and it was even spreading to his face.

"*That* will be you, Sonic." He hissed, but in a quieter voice. As much as Shadow didn't want to let his fears bleed into his voice, it did. "If you don't stop your recklessness, your disregard for consequences, you *will* not make it one day. And that day will come sooner than you think. And then what kind of hero will the world remember you as then?"

Sonic's eyes hardened at that, and he pushed Shadow off. He didn't sneer at him, but the look on his face was more hostile than a frown. "I wont really *be* there to know how the world will remember me, since I'll be dead. I'm assuming that's what you meant, right?"

That answer made Shadow absolutely *lose it*.

He snarled and moved to attack Sonic with a punch to his face, which was quickly dodged. Shadow followed up by teleporting behind Sonic in the air and kicking his head, but Sonic rolled forward to dodge again. He teleported again to where Sonic landed, kicking forward, but it only threw Sonic back a bit as he had blocked the attack with his arms, a smirk on his face. He was actually *enjoying this*.

Shadow continued to attack Sonic in anger, too pissed off to notice that Sonic was completely on the defensive, and was doing it with relative ease. Or rather, while Shadow attacked with so much emotion

in each strike, Sonic was gracefully dodging or blocking each hit like this was an everyday occurrence between the two of them.

The only thing that stopped them was the sound of a whimper.

“My name is…”

Shadow froze mid-punch, his fist landing on Sonic’s arm with no more pressure than a bump, his eyes darting towards the source of the voice. Future Sonic’s voice was deeper, older, more mature, and also filled with pain and uncertainty as he spoke.

“My name…is…?” he asked himself, and even the present Sonic had to glance at his older counterpart, eyes wide. As he and Shadow called a silent ceasefire, neither could tear their gazes away from the older hedgehog.

Slowly, Shadow’s gaze drifted back to Sonic, his Sonic. “…do you see what you’ll go through? That one day…you’ll forget yourself, forget being a hero? Do you understand?”

Sonic kept staring, but after a few moments, he sighed softly, closing his eyes and resting a hand on his hip.

“…I think it’s you who doesn’t understand.”

Shadow’s eyes widened, his face contorting in confusion, even insult. But before he could react, Sonic’s walked forward and crouched beside his older self, putting a hand on the intact shoulder.

“Your name is Sonic, Sonic the Hedgehog.” He said confidently, yet sincerely, like he was talking to an old friend, before glancing up at Shadow with a cheeky grin. “Just a guy who loves adventure.”

The older version seemed to breathe a bit more deeply, before he started to stand up on shaky feet. There was a grimace on his face, but his eyes showed confidence, determination.

“Heh, I must be losing it if I’m talking to myself…” he mumbled to himself with a tired smirk, and it was the first time that Shadow heard this older Sonic speak without pain in his voice. Even though it was deeper, more mature, and sounded like it belonged to someone carrying the weight of the world…it was still definitely Sonic.

And just like any blue hedgehog that Shadow’s encountered on this weird little trip, future Sonic dashed forward in a flash of blue, a trail

of light behind him (*a new power?*), leaving Shadow alone with the present Sonic. His Sonic, who just grined at him, his arms behind his back as he gestured for them to leave the zone now.

“I don’t understand.” Shadow admitted quietly with frustration. For someone who seemed so easy to read, who showed his heart on his sleeve, why was Sonic so…so confusing? So *simple* yet so *complex?*

“Chill out, Shadow.” Sonic replied patting him on the shoulder as they began to walk together. “You don’t need to understand something to like it. Or hate it, in your case.” He teased.

“I never said I hated you.”

“Yeah, yeah…” Sonic laughed. “I don’t hate you too, Shadow. Now come on, I get a feeling were just about close to finishing this little trip!”

They dashed off to exit the zone, leaving older Sonic to his future *(doom?),* A part of Shadow still gritted his teeth in frustration. He wanted to understand, he wanted to know what makes Sonic tick. What made Sonic…Sonic. He wanted to understand his rival because…just because.

(Several years later, when that same older Sonic is now present Sonic, telling Shadow of his latest adventure on Starfall Islands, boasting about fighting titans that even Shadow could never dream of…Shadow thinks he finally understands.)

End Notes

Some story notes: Generations still had the concept of 'zones', that Sonic had to run through, so he calls the places they're going through as that. For this section in the Time Eater's weird thing, the three 'zones' taken were areas from Kronos, Ares and Chaos Island, the last is where this story actually takes place. I messed around w Starfalls' timeline a bit by making Frontiers Sonic start losing his memory as early as Chaos for this plot, but I don't think that was too far a stretch.

Like I said, its been a while since I wrote for Sonic, so I hope you'll be kind enough to leave any kind of feedback. I am also interested to hear people's thoughts on how I characterize and portray the two hedgehogs here, especially as I kept some things vague. Either way, thank you very much for reading!

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